know when and how, and to what extent—it can emerge as one economic zone. It has a potentiality and India is harping on that for quite some time that this zone should be developed and economic co-operation among the SAARC countries should expand. That is our objective.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Next question.

Export of rice under new export policy

*2. SHRI MOHINDER SINGH LATHER :

SHRI SOM PAL :†

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that free export of rice and basmati rice has been permitted by Government; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the New Export Policy relating to these items ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMERS AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) and (b) Export of rice (basmati and non-basmati) is freely permitted subject to Minimum Export Price (MEP) as fixed by Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT). In the case of non-basmati rice, the exports are further subject to ex-post facto monitoring by the Agricultural and Processed Foods Export Development Authority (APEDA).

श्री सोमपाल : सभापति महोदय, चावल के निर्यात व्यापार में भारत की स्थिति अंतर्राष्ट्रीय बाजार में बहुत अच्छी हो सकती है । पिछले वर्ष हमारा केवल 709 करोड़ रुपए का निर्यात हुआ जब कि थाईलैंड ने हमारे साढ़े 4 लाख टन के मुकाबले में 44 लाख टन और वियतनाम जैसे छोटे देश ने 17 लाख टन का निर्यात किया । हमारे पड़ौसी देश पाकिस्तान का निर्यात 9 लाख टन है और हमारा केवल साढ़े 4 लाख टन । यदि एक ठीक नीति अपनाई जाए तो भारत 2 हजार से 3 हजार करोड़ रुपए का चावल प्रति वर्ष निर्यात कर सकता है ।

इसके मार्ग में मुख्य कठिनाई कृषि मंत्रालय के तहत काम करने वाला कृषि उत्पाद निर्यात विकास प्राधिकरण जिसको "एपेडा" कहा जाता है, उसकी नकारात्मक नीति सबसे बड़ी रुकावट रही है । यह बजाए विकास करने के उसके मार्ग में रुकावट ज्यादा डाल रही है क्योंकि चाहे चावल की मात्रा कितनी निर्यात की जाए, इसका निर्णय हो, चाहे उसकी कीमत का निर्णय हो और कौन एजेंसी उसको हैंडिल करेगी, यह सब तदर्थवाद के आधार पर, एडहाकिज्म के आधार पर तय किया जाता है । परिणाम यह है कि उसके निर्यात का स्थाई आधार पर कोई विकास नहीं हो पा रहा है ।

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please come to the Question.

श्री सोमपाल : सर, इस बैकग्राउण्ड के बगैर संभव नहीं है । इससे लंबे प्रश्न दूसरे सदस्य पूछते रहे हैं . . . (व्यवधान)

क्या "एपीडा" की इस एडहॉक नीति से बासमती चावल के निर्यात को मुक्त किया गया है इस नई नीति के तहत अथवा नहीं यह मैं जानना चाहता हूं ?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : No, Sir. It is not so. It is true that at one point of time we had not been very much enthusiastic about exporting grains because of sensitivity of the domestic market. But under the new EXIM policy—rather, under the amended EXIM policy—it could be noted that agricultural products export has been given a boost. A series of changes and concessions have been introduced to support, to sustain, export of agricultural products. Even on the floor of this House, I had mentioned, on an earlier occasion, that in order to maintain our steady market, steady export market, we should not mind even trading in the

†The question was actually asked on the floor at the House by Shri Som Pal.

same commodity, exporting and importing the same commodity. I gave the example of rice. There is nothing wrong. I gave the example of export of non-Basmati rice at the minimum export price of Rs. 250 dollars per tonne and import of cheaper varieties of rice from other countries. Therefore, this is not an ad hoc policy. It is a continuing policy. I do think that Indian agriculture can support a sustainable export effort by generating adequate exportable surplus.

SHRI SOM PAL : Sir, I had asked a question in regard to Basmati, specifically.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You ask your second supplementary.

SHRI SOM PAL : Sir, the hon. Minister has not replied to my question in regard to Basmati. I wanted to know whether in regard to Basmati, the ad hoc policy pursued so far by APEDA has been done away with or not. That was my specific question.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : What is the ad hoc policy ?

SHRI SOM PAL : The ad hoc policy relates to release of quota, fixing the price and designating the agenices which will handle the export. Has this been done away with or not ? This was my question. I am not asking about export. The Minister has given a general reply.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : So far as the export of Basmati rice is concerned, we have permitted Basmati to be exported freely and it is not under APEDA. So far as the minimum export price is concerned, the recommended minimum export price is 550 U.S. dollars per tonne, but actually, our exporters got 749 dollars per tonne last year.

SHRI SOM PAL : Sir, my second supplementary is that the production of Basmati has not been increasing at the desired pace because it has been facing several restrictions like compulsory levy, like its continuance, along with other superior varieties of rice, under the Essential Commodities Act, which has no rationale, Basmati can never be said to be an essential commodity. Therefore, I would like to konw considering the indigenous production and whether the hon. Minister would take steps to free Basmati from such restrictions so that the agriculturists can be in a better position to produce good varieties of rice and get a good price which will, in the long run, enthuse them to increase its production.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : So far as the levy is concerned, most of the States have already abolished, removed, this levy. So far as the question of exclusion of Basmati from the Essential Commodities Act is concerned, we have asked the State Governments to make the necessary changes. Most of them have done so. U.P. has also done, lately. It was one of the States which was not doing it earlier. So far as the production of high-yielding varieties is concerned, we are not in favour of it. I will explain why we are not in favour of it. Pakistan had done so, as a result of which the quality of rice has gone down. Pakistan exports almost two-thirds of the total world requirement. We are exporting only one-third. They are exporting double than ours. But Pakistan's per tonne realisation is very much less compared to ours. Therefore, we do not want that the quality of Basmati rice should go down by going through the mechanism of high-yielding varieties.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Vithalrao Madhavrao Jadhav. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : Sir, I am happy and I congratulate the hon. Minister for placing the new export-import policy before Parliament on the last day of the last Session, under which he has given a greater boost to the export of agricultural products. Now, this question is restricted to only rice; that too, Basmati rice. In this connection, may I know from the hon. Minister, what is the total production of Basmati rice in India, what is the indigenous consumption, and, consumption, how much quantity could we export ? The hon. Minister has just now said that the cultivation of basmati rice is restricted only to South India. There

are so many sophisticated varieties of rice which are grown in South India, in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Does the Minister think that some of the sophisticated varieties of rice which are grown in South India can also be exported so that the agriculturists of this country can get a better price for their agricultural produce? If so, what is the target of the export of basmati rice and the other sophisticated varieties of rice in the Eighth Five Year Plan, how much foreign exchange will we get?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: So far as production of basmati rice and its consumption in the domestic market is concerned, separate statistics are not being maintained. As regards export, Sir, in 1992-93 we exported 2,86,000 tonnes but the hon. Members would appreciate that perhaps from commercial point of view it would not be prudent to indicate in advance how much we want to export in the coming year. Even for the non-basmati variety of rice which we call 'superfine rice', we have a target of export and it is substantial, but the hon. Member should not insist on the exact figure because it is a commercial item and India is, after all, a big supplier. So, we should not disclose all our details in respect of the commercial intelligence. But this is a sustained programme and in the category of superfine non-basmati rice also we are exporting. In order to maintain the steady export market and to generate the exportable surplus, necessary supportive measures, both from the administrative Ministry and from the Commerce Ministry will be taken. As and when the exporters and producers come and point out what changes in the policy are needed, they are always attended to and will continue to be attended to.

श्री महेश्वर सिंह : सभापति महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि चावल के अतिरिक्त कौन कौन से फूड प्रोडक्ट्स हैं जिनका आज भारत से निर्यात हो रहा है और सेस के रूप में गत वर्ष वाणिज्य विभाग को कुल कितनी आय हुई और वह कहां कहां और किस एजेन्सी के माध्यम से खर्च की गई ? क्या यह भी सत्य है कि ओपेडा ने मांग की है कि सेस के रूप में जो राशि प्राप्त होती है वह उसे सौंपी जाए ताकि बागवानों को और किसानों को जो एक्सपोर्ट का काम करते हैं उनको सुविधा देने के लिए जिन फूड प्रोडक्ट्स का आज निर्यात हो रहा है उनका स्तर ऊंचा करने में खर्च की जाए ? यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है और सरकार ने उस संदर्भ में क्या निर्णय लिया है ?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: So far as export in respect of agricultural items is concerned, the whole list is there in the book itself. The hon. Member can look into it, but a sufficient quantum starting from tobacco to tea, to coffee, to spices and a large number of other agricultural products is exported. In the new policy also we have suggested that value-added agricultural products like flour, fruits and vegetables, should also be exported. In regard to the cess charged by APEDA on certain items, a separate notice will be required.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am on some different line of thinking. I remember, when non-basmati rice was to be exported it was leaked out and immediately the price of rice went up. I raised the issue in the House and if I remember correctly, the Prime Minister had said at that time that whatever contract we had made we would honour it, but henceforth we would not export rice from this country. For basmati rice I can understand, it is the rich people who consume it, but now the Minister says that a substantial quantity of superfine rice will also be exported.

I would like to know whether the consumer interest will be taken into account, or just to get foreign exchange we are going to allow the market price of rice to go up. Will the hon. Minister ponder over this point? you are ging to export non-basmati rice also, the price is bound to go up and the consumers will be hard hit. Will the Government consider this aspect and see that no such situation is created

by which the price of rice goes up? The moment you export one type of foodgrains, its price goes up in the market. Will the Government take into account this aspect?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : Sir, this is always being done. It is not that we export when there is a serious shortage. At the same time it has to be kept in view that to retain the presence steadily in the export market there should be no switch-off and switch-on. That is why it may so happen in the international market sometimes that we export and import the same commodities to maintain a balance for the domestic requirement and also to keep an eye on the prices of particularly sensitive items like foodgrains. But, Sir, it would not be possible for me to give any blanket assurance that there would be no import of non-basmati rice because it has been clearly established that access to external market would ensure better prices to farmers also so that there can be incentive to them. In reply to an earlier supplementary I have already mentioned that though we are exporting some varieties of rice, we are also importing some other varieties of rice to maintain the balance.

श्री भूपेन्द्र सिंह मान : सर, मिनिमम एक्सपोर्ट प्राइस की शर्त लगाकर किसानों की चीजें बाहर भेजने के ऊपर यह शर्त, यह रोक लगती है । इसमें बासमती के चावल का खास महत्व है । जब इसमें यह शर्त लगती है तो जो लोग एक्सपोर्ट कर रहे हैं वे वास्तव में कम दामों में कर रहे हैं । लेकिन प्राइस कांट्रेक्ट में ज्यादा दिखाकर वे इस शर्त को पूरा करते हैं । इससे एक्सपोर्ट कम हो रहा है और यहां प्राइस नीचे आ रही है । यह इसलिए नहीं कि वास्तव में यहां प्राइस नीचे हैं । यह मूल कारण है जो ये इसको ऐसा कर रहे हैं । इसलिए जो ये शर्तें हैं उनको टोटली तौर पर उठाना देश के हित में है । तो क्या इन्हें जल्दी उठाया जाएगा ?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : Sir, so far as the minimum export price is concerned, some representations have been received, and just now it would not be possible for me to indicate what decision Government will take.

Child Labour in Glass Bangle factories at Ferozabad

Child labour in Glass Bangle factories at Ferozabad

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE :

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report appearing in the Times of India dated March 26, 1993, captioned "Playing with hot glass for Rs. 30 per day", narrating the pathetic stories of children working as labour in glass factories at Ferozabad; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken during the last two years for the liberation of the bonded child labour and for welfare of other child workers in the glass bangle factories at Ferozabad ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Child Labour in Glass Bangle Factories at Ferozabad

Under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 there is no distinction between Adult and Child Bonded labour. As on 31-3-92, 2,50,289 bonded labourers have been identified of which 2,23,141 have been rehabilitated. There is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme under which the State Govts are provided 50% financial assistance for rehabilitation of bonded labourers. Under the Scheme financial assistance is given at the rate of Rs. 6250 per bonded labour.

Legislative provisions have been made in various laws to protect children from

† The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Sushilkumar Sambhajirao Shinde.